

VEDIC TEXTUO-LINGUISTIC STUDIES

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6. THE GRAMMATICAL PROBLEM OF THE GĀYATRĪ (RV III, 62, 10)¹

The well-known ṛk, remembered among the followers of the Vedic religion, as the *Sāvitrī*, being in praise of the god Savitār,² as the *Gāyatrī*, being composed in the metre of that name and as the *Gurumantra*, being the first Vedic mantra which an *ācārya* makes his new *brahmacārin* learn by heart at the time of the *Upanayana* ceremony of the latter,³ occurs, among the *Saṁhitā* texts, in *RV* (III, 62, 10), *SV* (II, 812), *VS* (III, 35 ; XXII, 9 ; XXX, 2 ; XXXVI, 3), *VSK* (III, 43 ; XXIV, 13 ; XXXIV, 2)⁴ ; *TS* (I, 5, 6, 4 ; 8, 4 ; IV, 1, 11, 1) and *MS* (IV, 10, 3) and, also, in some of the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas*, *Upaniṣads* and *Sūtras*, and in a number of later ritualistic and other texts.⁵ It reads as under :

तत् सवितुर् वरेण्यं, भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

1. The present paper is a revised form of the author's paper entitled 'The *Sāvitrī* ṛk (III, 62, 10) : Its grammatical problem', which was originally presented to and read at the 17th Session of the All-India Oriental Conference held at Ahmedabad and, later on, published under the title 'The *Gāyatrī* (RV III, 62, 10) : Its grammatical problem', as No. XIII (i), 1954, of the *Research Bulletin (Arts)* of the University of Panjab.

2. Cf. *Mantra-Brāhmaṇa* of the *SV* (I, 6, 29), *Āpastamba-Mantrapāṭha* (II, 4, 13) and *Hiraṇyakeśi Gṛhyasūtra* (I, 6, 11).

3. Cf. *Satapatha Br.* (XI, 5, 4, 6-7), *Āśval. Gr. S* (I, 21, 4-5), *Saṅkhāyana Gr. S* (II, 5, 12 ; 7, 8-11 ; 19).

4. Bloomfield, in his *Vedic Concordance*, p. 392, has missed to record these *VSK* references.

5. The great importance attached to the recitation of the *Gāyatrī* and the ever-increasing popularity of its formulaic pattern during the Vedic and the later ages is evident from the occurrence of eleven adaptations of this great Rgvedic mantra in *MS* (II, 9, 3-13), six in *TĀ* (X, 1) and as many as eighteen in the *Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad* (III, 1-18). These adaptations in the aforesaid texts

The relative pronominal form *yó* in *pāda c*, constituting the dependent clause, has its natural syntactical connection with the noun *bhārgas-*, 'light' occurring in its accusative singular form in the first hemistich, which constitutes the principal clause. *Bhārgas-* as employed here is a neuter base. This is indicated not only by the declensional pattern of *bhārgas-* but also by the neuter accusative form *tát* of the demonstrative pronoun *tád-* 'that'. Evidently, this demonstrative pronoun *tát*, as such, could be construed with the word *bhārgaḥ* only and no other word in the said principal clause. This should, however, become further clear from the recognition of the psychological necessity of taking the demonstrative pronoun as understood if it is not found expressly employed in a similarly constituted complex sentence.⁶ Thus, to take one out of the numerous examples of this type of usage, a reference might be made here to *RV VII, 96, 6*, where, in the same *gāyatrī* measure and in striking resemblance to the text before us, the deity proper is sought to be praised and approached, indirectly, through the praise of and the approach to something else appertaining to the said deity. That text reads as under :

पीपिवांसं सुरस्वतः, स्तनं यो विश्वदर्शतः । भक्षीमिदि प्रजासिषम् ॥

Here, the poet Vasiṣṭha addresses his prayer (*√bhakṣ* '*beg')⁷ for 'progeny' (*prajā-*) and 'prosperity' (*iṣ-*), to the god *Sārasvat-*, not

have been addressed, severally, to different deities. Besides the aforesaid grouped adaptations, single adaptations of the same type are found in several Upaniṣads and also in the various texts pertaining to the Vedic and Tantric ritual and, practically, coming down to this day (E.g., see the *Kāla-gāyatrī*, as read in the *Kāla-sahasranāma-stotra* of J. L. Kaul Jalali, Srinagar, 1969).

6. Cf. the well-known dictum, *yat-tadā nityasambandhaḥ* and also the *karika* :

तच्छब्देन तु यच्छब्दो बोद्धव्यः सततं बुधैः । उदाहृते तु यच्छब्दे तच्छब्दः स्यादुदाहृतः ॥

Yogiyājñavalkya IX, 41

7. This radical postulate is to be distinguished from *√bhakṣ* 'eat' and, also, it is not to be taken as being related to *√bhaj* 'enjoy' (as Śāyaṇa and, after him, other commentators have done). On the other hand, it might be said to have extended, morphologically as well as semasiologically, from *√*bhṛṣ* 'wish, want'. OIA *vis, vicch, vbhikṣ, vṛas*, and English *√beg*, and *√wish*, all signifying 'desire or 'need', might just be suggested as a few other radicals, traceable to a common ultimate proto-linguistic origin, viz., the above-mentioned *√*bhṛṣ*. That *√bhakṣ*,

directly but indirectly through the medium of the said god's 'breast' (*stāna-*). Thus, it is that god's breast which is praised by the poet as being 'full' (*pīpivās-*) and as all-lustre (*viśvā-darśata-*).

In pāda *b*, the demonstrative pronominal accusative singular 'that' (*tām*), being the logical demonstrative pronominal accusative singular correlative of the expressly stated relative pronominal nominative singular *yó*, is to be taken as understood (Compare Sāyaṇa's relevant comment : *yo viśva-darśataḥ...tām stanam*).

As shown above, the neuter pronominal form *tāt* in pāda *a* of our text along with the neuter nominal form *bhārgaḥ* in pāda *b* is syntactically correlated to the pronominal form *yó* in pāda *c*. The latter pronominal form has been equated by the author of the *Padapāṭha* and by all later commentators, with the masculine, nominative singular *yaḥ*, but this equation cannot be accepted as it would set out a construction which is obviously invalid in grammar. The ancient Vedic commentaries, as contained in the *Śatapatha* and other Brāhmaṇas, did not treat this verse exegetically and, so, had no occasion to take any notice at all of this important grammatical problem.⁸ However, later Indian commentaries have duly noted it and tried to solve it either (a) by taking the accusative pronominal form *tāt* as standing irregularly for the genitive pronominal

in the present context, possesses the postulated meaning is not only contextually appropriate but is also grammatically sound as is borne out by the word *stāna-* 'breast' as denoting the source of *prajā-* 'progeny' and *iśa-* 'prosperity', which are the real objects in view, being governed by the verb *bhākṣmāhi*, along with the said two objects, in the accusative case in accordance with the OIA idiom referred to by Pāṇini : *akathitañca* (I, 4, 51) and, also, indicated in the well known traditional list of roots (*du'i, yāc* etc.) which, along with their other synonymous roots, govern this type of secondary object along with the primary one.

8. Compare AB IV, 32, 2 etc. (see Bloomfield : *Vedic Concordance*, p. 392 for all other Brāhmaṇic references), where this verse is prescribed for recital either to the accompaniment of particular Vedic rituals or as a most sacred formula of great mystic import. This high status of it had already become established in YV *Saṁhitās*, White as well as Black. The methodology of Brāhmaṇic exposition, as is well known, concerned itself only with indicating the elements of particular rituals, supplying, incidentally, a mere mythological or allegorical annotation of the texts recited on the occasion and did not attempt anything like a running commentary from the literal and grammatical viewpoint. No wonder, then, that nowhere in these numerous texts has any notice been taken of our present problem.

form *tāsya* towards improvising its concord with the genitive nominal form *savitúh*⁹ so that the pronominal masculine form *yó* (*yaḥ*) also could, thereby, be made to refer to the god Savitár, himself, instead of its having to be connected with *bhārgas*, or (b) by construing the alleged masculine pronominal form *yó* as standing irregularly, for the neuter pronominal form *yát* towards bringing it into proper concord, as due, with the said neuter pronominal form *tát* in pāda *a*, governing *bhārgaḥ* in pāda *b*.¹⁰ But, it is passing strange that none in the now almost two-century long range of modern commentators concerned, both Indian and foreign, have made any reference to the problem before us. May be, they thought that it was mere verbal quibbling that the medieval scholiasts had leisurely indulged in. It will soon be obvious, however, that if they thought like that, they failed to take cognizance of a really difficult situation and, hence, missed a good opportunity of probing into an interesting linguistic problem.

The first suggestion made by the mediaeval scholiasts, viz., that the apparently accusative pronoun *tát* in pāda *a* should be construed as the genitive pronoun *tāsya* cannot be accepted either grammatically or poetically. For, to take the poetic aspect first, it would spoil all charm and directness of appeal. The poet, no doubt, glorifies in this verse the god Savitár, but he achieves this object, indirectly, by glorifying the bright (*vārenyam*)¹¹ brilliance (*bhārgas*) of the god. His

9. Compare Sāyaṇa on *RV* III, 62, 10; *VSK* III, 43; *SV* II, 812, Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara on *TS* I, 5, 6, 4, Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara on *VS* III, 35.

10. Compare Sāyaṇa on *RV* and Mahīdhara on *VS*, *supra cit.*

11. All previous writers (including V. M. Apte who has favoured us with an English rendering of this verse as treated in his yet unpublished Marathi Translation of and Notes on *R̥gveda*) have taken *√vr* (*var*) in *vārenyam* in the sense of 'to choose, covet, desire'. But, the suggested covetability of the brilliance (*bhārgas*) in question would, naturally, be a sort of secondary psychological experience, which could have arisen only after the poet concerned had been attracted, at the physical visual plane, by the dazzling quality of the said brilliance. Obviously, then, *√vr* (*var*), in the present context, should rather be taken in the sense of *√dṛpti* 'to shine', and not, as taken by others, in the sense of 'to choose etc.'

This *√vr* (*var*) '*shine' can be said to be connected, proto-linguistically, with the radical element *var* (or its phonetic variants *bar-*, *bhar-* etc., as the case may be), in Skt. *bra-(vra-)dhna-* 'sun', *bharga*, *bhārgas*, *√bhā*, *√bhrj*, *√bhrasj* (*√bhrjj*), *√bhrāj*, *√varc* (*Pā. Dhā.* II, 41; I, 173; VI 4; I, 181 and 843; I, 162), *varcas*, *√vā* (*Pā. Dhā.* II, 40), (as in *nirvāṇa*, *nirvāpa*), *√varṇ* (*Pā. Dhā.* X, 406),

reason for this indirect glorification is clear, namely, that it is the bright light, radiating from the god that really awakens the emotional fervour in his heart which naturally leaps up in praise of the immediate source of its inspiration, that is, the said light. The lyrical urge and romantic exhilaration, being the essence of poetry, welling up within him at the sight, in front of him, of this light,¹² spontaneously up-raises itself, so to say, towards reaching its highest tide-peak by carrying and keeping itself nearest to its source. From the poetic point of view, this emotional phenomenon is characterised by the most direct approach by an aroused and enkindled heart to the obvious centre of appeal, which, in the present context, is the light of Savitār (*bhārgas*). At the moment, the relationship that subsists between Savitār and his light (*bhārgas*) has a merely accidental value. Therefore, the content of *c* which offers the most significant justification to the content of *a b* can have a direct reference to *bhārgas* 'light' alone and not to the god Savitār to whom that *bhārgas* 'light', no doubt, belongs.¹³

The god is expected to accept the praise of his light as being his own praise as every owner does when something that he owns is praised or as every parent does when his or her child is praised. Indeed, the consciousness of the presence of the invisible god Savitār behind the apparent dazzling brilliance is an article of faith

varṇa, all 'brilliance' and *√vṛdh* (*Pā. Dhā. X*, 250) '*bhāṣane*, to shine'; Panj. *√balnū* 'burn'; Gk. *pur-* 'fire', *pyro-* '*ibid.*'; Eng. *pyre*, *fire*, *√burn*, Ger. *feur* 'fire.'

Metrically, the trisyllabic *vareṇyam* is to be pronounced as the quadri-syllabic *vareṇīyam* (cf. *pādapūraṇārtham kṣaiprasaṃyogaikākṣarābhāvān vyūhet, RV Sarvānukramaṇī*, I, 3, 6; see also *RV Prātisākhya XVII*, 22-23 and *Pīṅgalacchandās III*, 2).

12. Cf. *RV I*, 159, 5 : *tād rādhō adyā savitūr vāreṇyam vadyā devāsya prasavé manāmahe*, for an impressive parallelism, in as much as, here also, the pronoun *tāt* exerts its specially emphasized demonstrative force towards attracting the gaze of the poet concerned and fixing it up, in a very compelling manner, on the light (*rādhās*) of Savitār which he is face to face with. See also *RV I*, 22, 10 : *tād vīṣṇoḥ paramām padān sītā paśyanti sūryaḥ divīva cākṣur ātatam* and *VII*, 66, 16 : *tāc cākṣur devāhitam śukrām uccārat* for a similarly emphatic and directive use of the demonstrative pronoun *tāt*.

13. If Geldner had not remained content with his aphoristic remark (See his translation, Pt. I, p. 410, fn. on v. 10c) "er-lautert *a b*" ('expounds *a b*') and had but chosen to follow up the full implication of his own said remark, he might have saved himself from the previous commentators' common syntactical error of construing the pronoun *yō* in *c* with *savitūr* in *a* instead of *bhārgaḥ* in *b*.

with the poet which he just acknowledges in *a*. But the aesthetic appeal of the said divine brilliance (*bhārgas-*) is so compelling¹⁴ that the uppermost feeling in his mind at the moment is just to proceed forthwith to sing in praise of it, which he does (*dhīmahi*),¹⁵

14. Compare, *RV* I, 159, 5 (*a b*):

तद् राधो अथ सवितुर् वरेण्यं, वयं देवस्य प्रसवे मनामहे ।

where another poet, Dīrghatamas, son of Ucatha, in a similar situation of his heart, sings directly in praise of the same dazzling (*vārenya-*) brilliance (*rādhas-*) of the god (*devā-*) Savitār for exactly the same purpose, namely, that it (*rādhas*) may activate (us more and more to sing).

15. For a very telling textual parallel, cf., *RV* II, 11, 12:

त्वे इन्द्राण्यभूम विप्रा द्वियं वनेम क्रतया स्रन्तः ।

अवस्यूवो धीमहि प्रशस्तिं सद्यस्ते रायो दावने स्थाम ॥

where, in the second hemistich another poet, Gṛtsamada, addresses Indra as follows: 'Covetting Thy protection, we do sing Thy praise (*dhīmahi prāśastim*) and pray that we may forthwith become recipients of wealth at Thy hands.' Since a song in praise (*prāśasti*), which is the object of the verb *dhīmahi* could only be sung and not made the object of any other action, the said verb, in this context, can signify only 'saying, praising, worshipping', and not 'meditating upon' or 'depositing' as others have suggested by connecting it with *adhīai* or *adhā*, respectively. Likewise, cf., *RV* V, 82, 1: 6; VIII, 7, 18: 22, 18; 103, 5; X, 66, 2; *AV* VII, 18, 2, where the verb *dhīmahi*, being used in parallel contexts is to be taken in the same sense, viz., that of 'singing etc.'

The above connotation of the verb *dhīmahi* is further vouched for by the uniform use of the dative case of the nouns as governed by this verb in its occurrences in the abovesaid numerous later adaptations of the Gāyatrī (see fn. 5 *supra*). For instance, we might cite here one of the earliest of the said adaptations towards further explaining the point at issue:

महालक्ष्म्यै च विद्महे विष्णुपत्न्यै च धीमहि ।

तन्नो लक्ष्मीः प्र चोदयात् ॥

(*RV Khila* after V, 87: *Śrīsūkta*, 26)

The use herein of the dative case in *mahālakṣmīyai* indicates that the action as connoted by the verb *dhīmahi* is intended to be made acceptable, like a present, to the Goddess Mahālakṣmī (cf., *kriyayā yam abhiprāiti so 'pi sampradānam*, vārt. on *Pā.* I, 4, 32). It is quite obvious that this intended datival relationship between the deity, on the one hand, and either of the actions, as suggested by others, of 'meditating upon' or 'placing, depositing in or on' on the other, is unthinkable because the action itself, in the absence of any other tangible object, is being offered to Mahālakṣmī as a present for her acceptance. But, in the case of the connotation of 'singing of, praising', as being suggested

by us, the situation becomes entirely different, because, here, the action itself is directly presentable to and, correspondingly, acceptable by the deity. Moreover, the evidence of actual usage in Vedic and Classical Sanskrit is quite conclusive on this point, in as much as the roots *arc*, *ah* (in *āha* etc.), *kath*, *khyā*, *gā*, *gir*, *caks*, *ni-vid*, *brū*, *rap*, *vad*, *śanis* and *stu* govern the dative of the person to whom something is told (Cf. A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Grammar for Students*, § 200-c; V. S. Apte, *Guide to Sanskrit Composition*, § 68). *vidh* 'worship, praise' (*Nigh.* III, 5; *Pā.Dhā.* VI, 45), likewise governs the person spoken to in the dative case (cf., *vidhēma t...st/maih.* *RV* II, 9, 3; and *kāsmā devāya haviṣā vidhēma*, *RV* X, 121, 1-9). As evident from the above usage of *vidh*, the words employed to give its meanings in *op. cit.* *Nigh.* and *Pā. Dhā.*, viz., *paricarana* and *vidhāna*, respectively, are to be taken in the said sense of 'worship, praise' and, thereby to be related, in a general way, to 'ākhyāna', being the meaning ascribed to *vid* (*Pā.Dhā.* X, 175) which may be considered as a variant of *vidh*.

What has been said here regarding the meaning and usage of the verb *dhīmahi* is still further supported by the exactly parallel use, in pāda *a*, of the verb *vidmahe* as governing the word *Mahālakṣmī* in the dative case. In the present example, as well as in all other adaptations of the *Gāyatrī*, the verb *vidmahe* in pāda *a* is to be taken as being related to *vid* *ākhyāna* 'tell' (*Pā. Dhā.* X, 175) which is conjugated here as a class-2 root and not as being related to *vid* in any of its other recorded senses, viz., *jñāna* 'knowing' (*Pā. Dhā.* II, 54), *sattā* 'existing' (*Pā. Dhā.* IV, 65), *labha* 'winning' (*Pā. Dhā.* VI, 152) and *vicāraṇa* 'thinking' (*Pā. Dhā.* VII, 13), because, in none of these, the action itself could be thought of as being directly presentable to and acceptable by the deity concerned.

The use in pādas *a* and *b* of the two synonymic verbs, viz., *vidmahe* and *dhīmahi*, poses a kind of repetition (*abhyāsa*), intended just to emphasize the intense fervour of the devotee to worship the deity. (Cf., for a parallel, *RV* II, 11, 12, as cited in the beginning of this footnote, where, pāda *c* reiterates, practically, the contents of pādas *a* and *b*).

In a context of the present type (cf., for parallels, *RV* V, 82, 6; 7, 18; VIII, 22, 13; 103, 5; X, 66, 2; *AV* VII, 13, 2), it may be better to take the verb *dhīmahi* as a tense form, being present continuous (*laṭ*) or present perfect, (*luṅ*) as Śāyana (alternatively), Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara (alternatively), Uvaṭa, Mahādhara, Geldner and V. M. Apte have taken and not as a form in the potential mood (*liṅ*) as Venkaṭa-Mādhava, Śāyana (alternatively), Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara (alternatively), Dayānand and Griffith have taken. In view of the picture, as drawn above, of the poet becoming exhilarated by the presence, in front of him, of the brilliant light of the God Savitar and, thereby, urged to sing of the said light, (see p. 12, *supra*), it would be preferable to take this verb *dhīmahi* as a form of the present continuous tense (*laṭ*) rather than that of the present perfect tense (*luṅ*) as Apte has done (*op. cit.*). The uniform use of the verb *vidmahe*, being a form of the Present continuous tense (*laṭ*), in all the aforesaid numerous adaptations of the *Gāyatrī*, may well be said to be leading to the same conclusion, viz., that our verb *dhīmahi* is also a form of the present continuous tense (*laṭ*).

The said divine brilliance (*bhārgas*), when looked upon under a spell of inspired devotion, enters, so to speak, the heart of the devotee, filling it up with thrilling inspiration which enlivens his songs (*dhīyaḥ*) and make them burst forth (*pracodāyāt*). In consonance with this poetic imagery, *yó* in *c* demands its construction with neuter *bhārgaḥ* in *b* being held valid and, therefore, being justified as such on some sound linguistic basis. In view of this irresistible position, *tát* in *a* demands, in its turn, that, as an expression of the poet's demonstrably direct approach to the said divine brilliance (*bhārgas*), it must needs retain its present objective case-relation which need not at all be violated to lend it the genitive colour and, thereby, to equate, it with *tasya*, as suggested by others, towards its concord with the next word *savitúr*.

Now, we might turn to the grammatical aspect of the aforesaid first suggestion as made by the medieval commentators. When they proposed taking the accusative pronoun *tát* as standing for the genitive pronoun *tasya*, they evidently took shelter behind the Pāṇinian admission of inter-substitution of different case-forms.¹⁶

The conjugational suffix *-mahi* has to be treated, simply, as a phonetic variant of the well-known alternative form *-masi* for *-mas* and, as such, to be differentiated from the Ātmanepada first person plural suffix *-mahi*.

From the point of view of the radical involved, the verb *dhīmahi* has to be related to √*dhā* (**dhī*) 'say, sing, praise', which may be said to have developed from (√*bhṛdh* >) √*vr̥dh* 'id' (*bhāṣā*, *Pā.Dhā*. X, 250), the proto-linguistic process involved being: √*vr̥dh* > **vr̥dh-vr̥dh* > **vr̥dhvat* > : (1) **vr̥dhat* > (*br̥hat* >) *br̥hatī* 'speech'; (2) > **br̥arvat* > *br̥arvat* > √*brū*; (3) > **ra-(l̥a)pat* > √*rap*, √*lap*; (4) **dhvat* > **dhat* > √*dhat* (cf, °*dhatte* in *abhi*° etc.); (5) > (**dhattu* >) *dhātu* 'verb'; (6) > (°*dhatṭr* >) °*dhatṭr* (in *abhi*° 'speaker'; (7) > (**dhajh* > **dhay* > √*dhay* > √*dhī* > √*hī* > √*hi* >) *ohita*°, *ohiti* (in *abhi*°).

It may be worthwhile to make a reference, in this connection, to the present writer's paper entitled 'Vedic textuo-linguistic studies-4' (*VJ* 5 [1967] 13-24), where in fn. 10 (p. 19) and fn. 64 (pp. 21-22), the aforesaid proto-linguistic √*bhṛdh* has been shown, just by way of illustration, to have developed into about 150 Sanskrit roots, all drawn from *Pā.Dhā*. and quite a number of NIA and I-Ir. roots.

16. Compare, *Pā*. III, 1, 85 enunciating admission of irregularity (*vyatyaya*), in general, in Vedic word-forms, categorically referred to in the following *kārikā* :

सुषतिङुग्रहलिङ्गनराणां, कालहलच्स्वरकर्तृयङां च ।

व्यत्ययमिच्छति शास्त्रवृद्धेः, सोऽपि हि सिद्ध्यति बाहुलकेन ॥

Compare, also *Pā*. VII, 1, 39 and, particularly, the *vārttika* :

सुषां सुषो भवन्तीति वक्तव्यम्

on the same, pointing to the substitution, in general, of one case form in place of another.

But it seems unthinkable that any language, much less, the highly developed Vedic language could tolerate this kind of usage which would necessarily mean negation of clear communication of thought between one speaker and another.¹⁷

17. What might have happened was that a number of word-forms had become identical, mainly owing to the working through, the ages, of the natural process of phonetic decay. Thus, to take the only example which has been employed by the Pāṇinian school to illustrate the phenomenon of the use of one case-form for another, namely, *pānthāḥ* in RV X, 85, 23 which, they say, is nominative singular used in place of the nominative plural *pānthānah* of the base *pathin*-‘path’. In order to understand the situation clearly, we have to note that there are, besides this form *pānthāḥ*, which is nominative singular as well as plural, the other two closely resembling forms, namely, *pānthām* (acc. sing.) and *pānthāsaḥ* (nom. plu.) which might be considered together. If we postulate here a new base **pānthās*- instead of Pāṇini’s *pathin*-, all of these forms can be easily derived from it.

In postulating the base as **pānthās*- in preference to **pānthas*-, the idea is to reach the nom. plu. form *pānthāsaḥ* straightway without taking recourse to another postulation, namely, **pānthā*-, and, then, invoking the aid of Pā. VII, 1, 50 which might supply the extended nom. plu. suffix -*asas* in place of -*as* as required to arrive at this form (compare Vedic word-forms like *uśāsaḥ*, *uśāsām*, *sapsarāśaḥ*, respective bases of which, likewise, might advantageously be given a penultimate *ā* instead of *a* as is being done at present to conform to the Pāṇinian suffixal provision of -*dsuc* in the absence of an additional one for -*āsuc* as well). For the two forms, viz., *pānthāḥ* (nom. sing.) and *pānthāsaḥ* (nom. plu.) are quite regular and the other two forms, viz., *pānthāḥ* (nom. plu.) and *pānthām* (acc. sing.) also, become obviously regular by admitting in their evolution the simple Prakritism of the elision of an inter-vocalic consonant followed by the coalescence of the vowels, which become contiguous as a result of the said elision. This process may be represented as under :

(1) *pānthāsaḥ* > **pānthāhaḥ* > **pānthāaḥ* > *pānthāḥ* (=nom, plu. hence quite distinct from *pānthāḥ*, nom, sing.)

(2) *pānthāsam* (=acc. sing.) **pānthāham* > **pānthāam* > *pānthām*.

Even though the Pāṇinian grammar contains, within itself, the most comprehensive material, as available today, relating to the grammar of Vedic Sanskrit as distinguished from classical Sanskrit, it may have to be admitted that the Pāṇinian technique was evolved, primarily, rather to comprehend the post-Vedic aspect than the Vedic aspect of Sanskrit. That this was so, is evidently suggested by its having missed, in the present context, to take any notice of the forms *pānthāḥ* (nom. plu.), *pānthāsaḥ* (ibid.) and *pānthām* (acc. sing.) which could not, in any way, be fitted into its provisions. Obviously, in order to achieve this end, the provision, in Pā. VII, 1, 85, for converting the base *pathin*- into

Sāyaṇa offered an alternative solution to our present grammatical problem by proposing that the pronominal form *yó*, which he took, unquestioningly, as the masculine nom. sing. of the pronominal base *yád-*, might be made to do duty here for the regular neuter nom. sing. *yát* so that it could concord with the neuter nominal base *bhúrgas-* in pāda *b* and get into correlation with the neuter pronominal form *tát* in pāda *a* all right. This he might have done under the authority of the aforesaid general admission, at the hands of the Pāṇinian tradition, that the Vedic language could tolerate every kind of grammatical irregularity. Mahīdhara, too, while commenting on this ṛk at VS III, 35, expressed his readiness to adopt this suggestion as a sound alternative course. But, linguistically, this is an unsound proposition and, as such, the Vedic idiom does not at all countenance the false concord of this type between nominal and pronominal forms of different genders. On the other hand, Vedic usage strictly adheres to the really due concord between the pronominal correlates *yát* and *tát* of the same gender and number.¹⁸ Indeed, adjectives and pronouns do not have any independent genders of their own; they simply assume the respective genders of the nouns they qualify or are connected with. Thus, one cannot grammatically conceive of expressions like *mahān vanam*, *mahān nadī*, *mahatī nadaḥ*, *mahatī vanam*, *sa vanam*, *tad nadaḥ* etc. Therefore, when the Pāṇinian tradition under reference above alluded to the Vedic gender-variation, it must have done so with

**pathā-*, being the first stage on its way to its real destination, viz., **pānthā-* (nom. sing.), must be so extended as to make it applicable to the Vedic forms *pānthāḥ* (nom. plu.) and *pānthām* (acc. sing.). Grammatically, it would have been far more correct for Kātyāyana to admit this supplementary provision than generalising, as he has done, without the least linguistic justification, that in Vedic OIA one declensional form could be replaced by another without changing the sense (compare Sāyaṇa who, alone of the medieval scholiasts did, at least once, namely, when commenting on *pānthām* in RV I, 24, 8, bethought himself of the aforesaid suggestion of extending the scope of Pā. VII, 1, 85 to the said accusative case-form. It is, however, a pity that instead of marking it off as a fit case demanding justifiable supplementation of the traditional Pāṇinian data, he simply disposed it of as a *vyatyaya* irregularity').

18. Compare, e.g., *ye-te*, RV I, 57, 4; 85, 1-2; 105, 9-11 etc.; *yasya-tasya*, RV X, 9, 2-3 etc.; *yā-tā*, RV I, 91, 19; 162, 8; 13-14, etc.; *yāḥ-tāḥ*, RV I, 23, 17; 84, 12-12 etc.; *yām-tām*, RV X, 64, 12; *yābhiḥ-tābhiḥ*, RV I, 112, 1; 23; VI, 28, 3 etc.; *yebhiḥ-tebhiḥ*, RV X, 96, 5-6; *yāsām-tāsām*, RV X, 169, 2-4.

reference to the nouns only. Thus, to take its stock example of the present context, namely, Vedic *mádhoḥ* (besides *mádhunah*) for classical *mádhunah*¹⁹ only, it just indicates that during the Vedic period of the history of OIA, the neuter¹⁹ noun *mádhū*- 'honey' or 'sweet drink' possessed oblique declensional forms which fell under three distinct patterns, later on, in course of time, severally distinguished gender-wise and fixed as such.²⁰

In view of the above discussion, the pronominal form *yó* in our Gāyatrī text, if it were masculine as it has been universally taken to be so far, could fit in, syntactically, only if the noun, referred to by it, namely *bhārgas-* in pāda *b* could be taken as masculine. And, it is certainly amusing to find that a few medieval commentators have actually made a mess of the whole thing by taking *bhārgaḥ* in pāda *b* as a declensional form of the masculine base, *bhārga-*. Thus, Halāyudha, in his gloss on Gāyatrī in his *Brahmaṇa-saṃyasa*,²¹

19. See RV I, 14, 10 etc. for fixing the Vedic gender of *mádhū*-.

20. Thus, besides the classically expected neuter forms, *mádhū*, *mádhunah*, *mádhunā*, *mádhūne*, *mádhūnām* and *mádhūni*, there are found in RV the following forms also :

(a) *mádhoḥ* (I, 14, 8 etc.) and *mádhau* (VII, 32, 2 etc.), conforming to the post-Vedic masculine pattern of gen. sing. and loc. sing., respectively.

(b) *mádhvāḥ* (I, 14, 4 etc.) and *mádhvā* (I, 47, 4 etc.), conforming to the post-Vedic feminine pattern of acc. plu. and inst. sing., respectively.

21. Ed. Durgamohan Bhattacharyya, Calcutta, 1960. See. pp. 68-70 :

तत् तस्य सवितुः तं भर्गः तेजः धीमहि चिन्तयामः । अत्र यद्यपि तमिति पदं भर्गविशेषणं नास्ति तथापि 'यः' इति यच्छब्दप्रयोगादेव तच्छब्दो लभ्यते । तथा ... योगि-याज्ञवल्क्यः (९, ४१) —

तच्छब्देन तु यच्छब्दो बोद्धव्यः सततं बुधैः ।

उदाहृते तु यच्छब्दे तच्छब्दः स्यादुदाहृतः ॥

... किम्भूतः ? यो भर्गो नोऽस्माकं धियो बुद्धीः प्रचोदयात् प्रेरयति ... तथा च योगि-याज्ञवल्क्यः (९, ४३) —

चिन्तयामो वयं भर्गं धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ।

धर्मार्थकाममोक्षेषु बुद्धिबुद्धौ पुनः पुनः ॥

इति । तद्विह भर्गशब्देन बहुविधमाहात्म्ययुक्तः सवितृमण्डलगतादित्यदेवतास्वरूपः पुरुष उच्यते । तथा च योगि-याज्ञवल्क्यः (९, ५२-५३) —

following an older writer, Yogi-yājñavalkya²², whom he quotes *in extenso*, supplies the pronoun *tam* (acc. sing.) to concord with (*bhārga-*>) *bhārgaḥ* (nom. sing.=acc. sing. by implication) towards correlating the same with *yó* (*-yáh* [*bhārga-*>] *bhārgaḥ*). Śatrughna, in his *Mantrārtha-dīpikā*, for which he claims no originality,²³ has practically copied out Halāyudha's comment in its entirety. These writers dispose of *tāt* by taking it for the genitive *tāsya* towards its construction with *Savitúr*. Guṇaviṣṇu, the author of *Chāndogya-mantra-bhāṣya*,²⁴ was bold enough to state that *tāt* referred, by implication, to the course of study (*adhyayana-*) and that both *vareṇya-* ('to be desired') and *bhārga-* ('to be pursued', should rather be, 'to be cooked'), were adjectives qualifying *tāt* after the manner of potential participles, and, further, that the genitive in *Savitúr* and *devāsya* was used in the sense of 'agent'. He took the form *bhārgaḥ* to be nom. sing. of the masculine base *bhārga-* but, undeterred by that observation of his own, he thought that it was only a Vedic irregular use for acc. sing. **bhārgam* which, he imagined, he wanted here. Even the semblance of consistency, however, forsook him when on reaching pāda *c*, he simply followed the previous commentators in construing *yó* with *Savitár* instead of *adhyayana-*, being his meaning of *tāt*, which one would have expected from him here.²⁵ Probably, he got unnerved

भुजिः पाके भवेद्भ्रातुर्गन्मात्पाचयते ह्यसौ ।

भ्राजते दीप्यते यस्माज्जगच्चाप्ते हरत्यपि ॥

कालाग्निरूपमास्थाय सप्तर्चिः सप्तरश्मिभिः ।

भ्राजते यस्वरूपेण तस्माद्भूर्गः स उच्यते ॥



अत्र यद्यपि प्राणिनां हृदि जीवरूपतया य एष भर्गस्तिष्ठति, स एवाग्निश्च आदित्यमध्ये पुरुषरूपतया विद्यते । अतोऽनयोर्भेदो नास्त्येव । तथापि त्रियो यो नः प्रचोदयादिति प्राणिनां बुद्धिप्रेरको यो हृदयवर्ती भर्गः स एव चिन्तनीयः ।

22. *Yogi-yājñavalkyam*, Ed. by P. C. Divanji, Bombay, 1954.

23. Banaras, 1948 V. See pp. 2 and 3 (verses 9 and 10) and pp. 22 and 23.

24. Ed. Durgamohan Bhattacharyya, Calcutta, 1930, pp. 74-75.

25. His comment may as well be supplied here in his own words :

“तत् अध्ययनं भगवतः ‘सवितुः’ ‘देवस्य’...‘वरेण्यं’ वरणीयं ‘भर्गः’ भजनीयं [? = भर्जनीयं] सवित्रापि सेव्यं [?] ‘धीमहि’ चिन्तयामः । स किम्भूतः सविता ? ‘यः’ ‘नः’ अस्माकं ‘धियः’...‘भर्गः’ इति ‘भृजि’-घातोः कर्मणि [= कृत्यार्थे] घञ्, व्यत्ययेन पुंस्त्व[?स्त्व] प्रथमेकवचने । (ib., pp. 74-75). ॥

when the real crux of the whole matter, namely, the correct construction of *yó*, suddenly stared him in the face after he had exhausted, it seems, his whole ingenuity in interpreting *pādas a* and *b* as a self-contained unit, unconnected with *pāda c*.

The solution proper, from the strict syntactical consideration, if to be expressed under the familiar Pāṇinian terminology, would lie in construing *yó* in *pāda c* as the neut. nom. sing. of either of the pronominal bases **yās-*, and **yāvan-*, both to be postulated as synonymic extensions of the pronominal base *yād*²⁶ which alone is known, at present, to the students of OIA.²⁷ It is, also, possible

26. The process of this extension may be represented, proto-linguistically, as (1) *ydd->*yđlmas->(*yámmas->*yāmas->*yāas->)*yās*; and, (2) *ydd->*yadman->(*yđmman->*yāman->*yāvan->)*yāvan*. While the NIA relative pronominal forms *jas* and *jis* represent *yadmas-*, being the ancestor of **yas-* and *jin* and *jaun* represent **yadman-*, being the ancestor of **yavan*, *jo* may represent either of them. Similarly, the NIA demonstrative pronominal bases *is-* and *us-* represent **admas-*, being the ancestor of *adas-*; *in-* and *un-* represent **adman-*, being the ancestor of **avan-*; *tas-* and *tis-* represent **tadmas-*, being an extension of *tad*; and *tin-* and *taun-* represent **tadman-*, being an extension of *tad* and ancestor of **tavan*. Likewise, the NIA interrogative pronominal bases *kas-*, *kis-* and *kus-* represent **kadmas-*, being an extension of *kad* as occurring in Veda, and *kaun* represents **kadman-*, being an extension of the same Vedic base. It may be interesting to contrast here the view put forth by Bloch (*Siddha-Bhārati*, V. V. R. Inst., Hoshiarpur, 1950, Pt. i, pp. 68-70), viz., that the NIA bases, *jaun-*, and *taun-*, have been modelled, analogically, after the NIA, base *kaun-* which he traces to the supposed combination of (OIA *kim->*)kāk* and (*ātmīn->*)MIA* and NIA *appan-*, rejecting Beams' as well as his own previous derivation of *kaun-*, from the OIA combination *kāh punah*.

27. It is interesting to find after having made a critical study of over one hundred Vedic verses, in which the correlative pronouns *ydd-* and *tdd-* are read, that if this study is exhaustively instituted, it is likely to prove an effective means of bringing to light a number of, so to say, such fossilised declensional forms of the said two pronouns as might justify the postulation of the parallel pronominal bases, **yād-*, **yās-*, **yā-*, **yadman-*, **yāvan-*, and **yōd-*, etc. alongside of *yād-* and, *mutatis mutandis*, of **tād-*, **tās-*, **sds-*, **sās-*, **tāman-*, **tdvan-*, **sdvan-* and *sōd-* etc., alongside of *tād-*. Compare, meanwhile, RV I. 84, 9 and I. 155, 4 where the adv. (=neu. acc. sing.) *yāh* (<**yās-*) is used for *yāt* (<**yād-*) and RV I. 116, 6; 144, 4; 148, 1; 3; 151, 1 and VI. 34, 3 where the adv. (=neu. acc. sing.) *yām* (<**yādm-*) is similarly used for *yāt* (<**yād-*). Also, compare, for a parallel study, RV I. 144, 5 and IV. 32, 13 where the adv. (=neu. acc. sing.) *tām* (<**tādm-*) is used for *tāt* (<**tād-*) and RV VIII. 13, 19 where either *yāt*, in the first hemistich, has to be

that the current reading *yó nah*, in our text, might be representing the original reading **yád nah*, > **yánnah*, Prākritically changed to **yānah* which was wrongly re-Sanskritised into the current reading *yó nah*, presumably, under the erroneous impression, which has yet to die out, that the pronoun here stood for the masculine base *Savitār* and not, in correlation with the pronoun *tāt* in pāda *a*, for the neuter base *bhārgas-* in pāda *b* as has already been discussed above in detail.

But it is more likely that the original reading was the trisyllabic (**yad *u nah* >) **ya u nah*, which, under metrical pressure, was compressed into the current bisyllabic reading *yo nah*.

In the light of the above discussion, the full mantra may, now, be rendered as follows :

Yonder brilliance bright

Of God Savitar we praise,

Which may make our songs²⁸ burst forth.²⁹

construed as standing for the masc. nom. sing. *yāh* (<*yād-*) or *só* in the second hemistich, has to be taken not as mas. nom. sing. but as adv. (=neu acc. sing. of **sāvan-* or **sāv-*, being equivalent of OIA (*tād->*) *tāt(d)*, NIA to and so and Eng. so, and, likewise, *RV* VIII, 45, 33 where *tāh* in pāda *a*, being correlated with adv. (=neu. acc. sing.) *yād* in pāda *c*, has also to be construed as such and, therefore, represents either 1 (**tās->*) *tāh* (= [**tād->*] *tāt* [cf. *RV* VI, 21, 6 where it is similarly used as adv. (=neu. acc. sing.) in correlation with **yād->yāt*]) or 2. (**tās->*) **tās* (*sukīrtāyāh*) > **tā su*° (through Prākritic elision of one *s* accompanied by the balancing elongation of the previous *d*) > *tāh* (through incorrect Sanskritisation, adding *h* to **tā* under the impression that the pronominal form was to be in apposition with the following fem. nom. plu. *sukīrtāyāh*). Compare, also, the adjectival and adverbial base *yāvat-* (alongside of the correlated base *tāvat-*) in which **yā-* is equivalent to *yād-* (alongside of **tā-* [in *tāvat-*] which is equivalent to *tād-*).

28. Poet Viśvāmitra has addressed in our present hymn (*RV* III. 62) a number of other deities also besides Savitār. Thus. the verse 7 ushers in a recital (*sasyate*) of fresh worship (*susṭutir*) to Puṣān and the verse 8 prays to the god to accept this worship, equating the same with *gīr-*, and *dhī-*. Obviously, in a context like this, *dhī-* connotes 'a prayer' or 'a hymn of praise', being the subject of recitation (*śas*). In the verse 12, too, priests (*vīprāh*), enthused (*iṣitāh*) by (their) hymn (*dhī-*), worship (*namasyānti*) the god, Savitār with well-dressed (*suvrktibhih*) offerings (*yajñāh*). For the fixation of this meaning of *dhī-* in its construction, like this, with *viś*, a comparison might be made with *RV* I, 3, 5; III, 12, 1; 60, 5. That *dhī-* as read in these texts possesses the suggested connotation

is further supported by RV IV. 49, 10 ; VII. 33, 13 and IX. 37, 6 where, in identical relationship, the word *kavi-* (denoting 'hymn' instead of 'hymn-maker') and the word *nāmas-* 'prayer' replace the word *dhī-*. Coming as our verse 10 does between the verses 8 and 12, it seems quite probable that here, too, the poet has employed the word *dhī-* in the same sense of 'a hymn' and, as such, it has to be derived from *√dhā-dhī* 'saying, praising, worshipping', as already discussed in fn. 15, *supra*, in connection with the verb *dhīmahi* in pāda b.

29. For the use of *pra √cud* (Pā. Dhā. X, 59) in the same sense; viz., that of 'driving forth, impelling', cf., RV I, 94 15 ; AV VII, 48, 3 ; XIX, 5, 1 ; 71, 1.